

Temporary Work Programs: What does the US want?

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Historical record

- Julian Simon - The Bracero program demonstrates that TWPs can substitute for unauthorized labor
- Other experts – The Bracero program, if it “worked,” did so unilaterally and only with draconian enforcement.
 - It also undercut domestic workers
 - It laid the seeds for latter illegal entries

Bracero

- Bracero was “binational,” but mostly US run with failures on both sides
- 1942 - 1964, 4.6 million Mexicans
- 1944 62,000 peak war year
 - ~ 0.5% of all agricultural workers
 - ~ 2% of U.S. hired workers
- 1955-59, 430,000 average yearly
 - ~ 5% of all agricultural workers
 - ~ 17% of U.S. hired workers

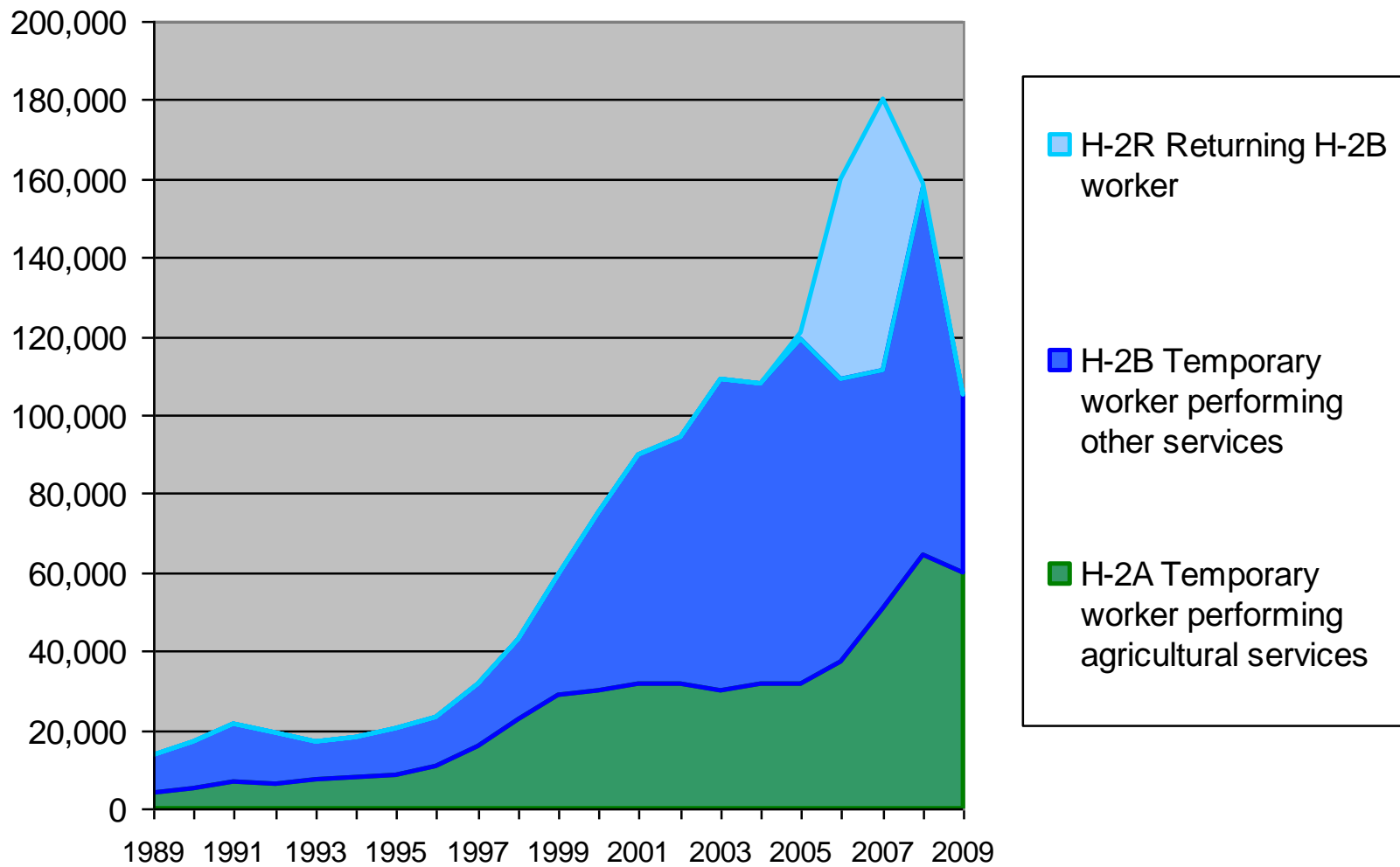
Revamping the H-2

- H-2 Visa INA 1952, split after 1986 into:
 - H-2A for seasonal agriculture
 - H-2B for other seasonal labor
- Growth from mid-1990s, induced by:
 - eased admissions (policy), labor shortages, or restructured demand?

Mexican temporary visas

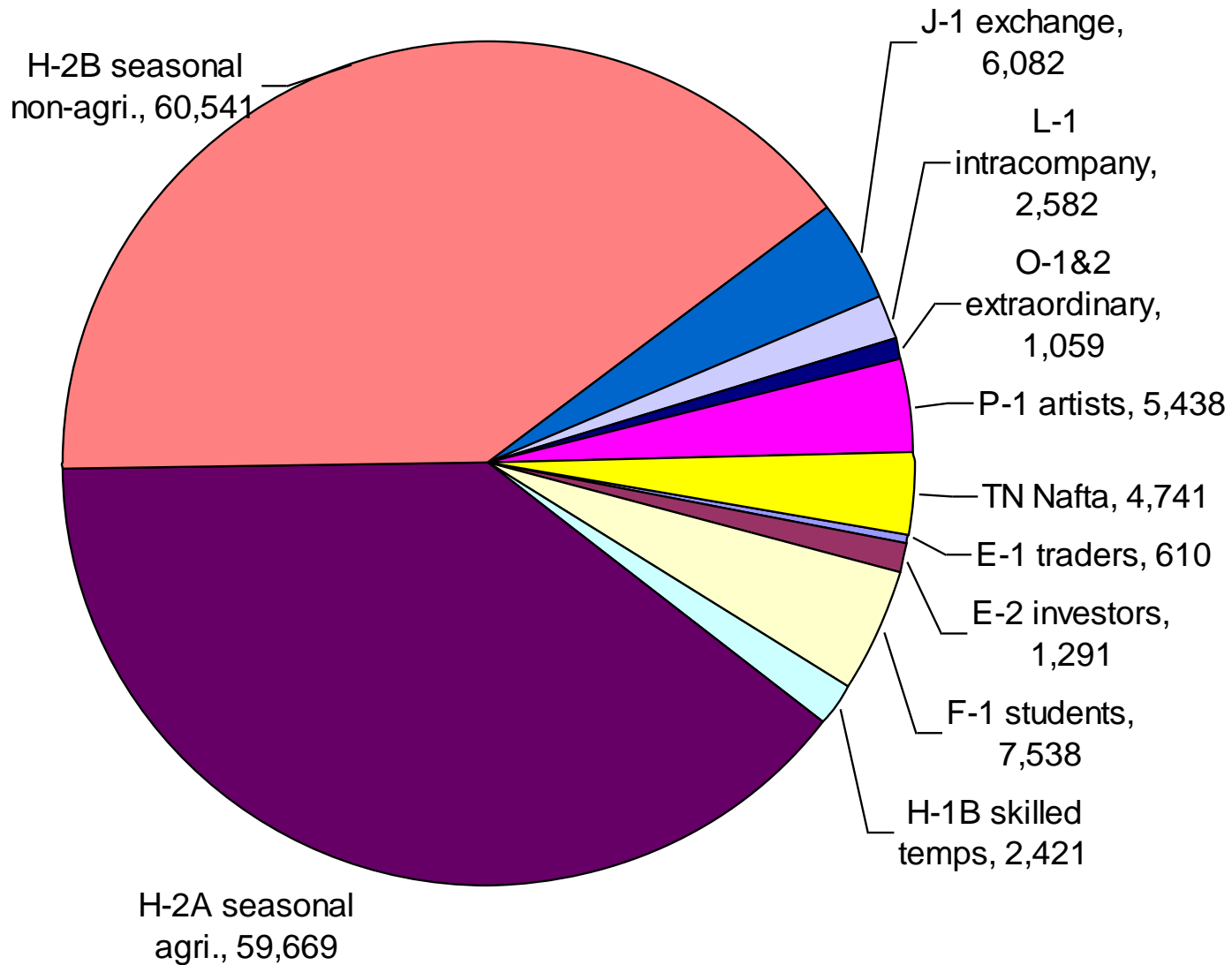
- Due to policy, shortages, or restructured demand, the numbers are substantial
- Bush policies encouraged use, will Obama policies discourage?
- Recent downturn, what role policy effects on increased wages?

Total H-2 Visas Issued, 1989-2009

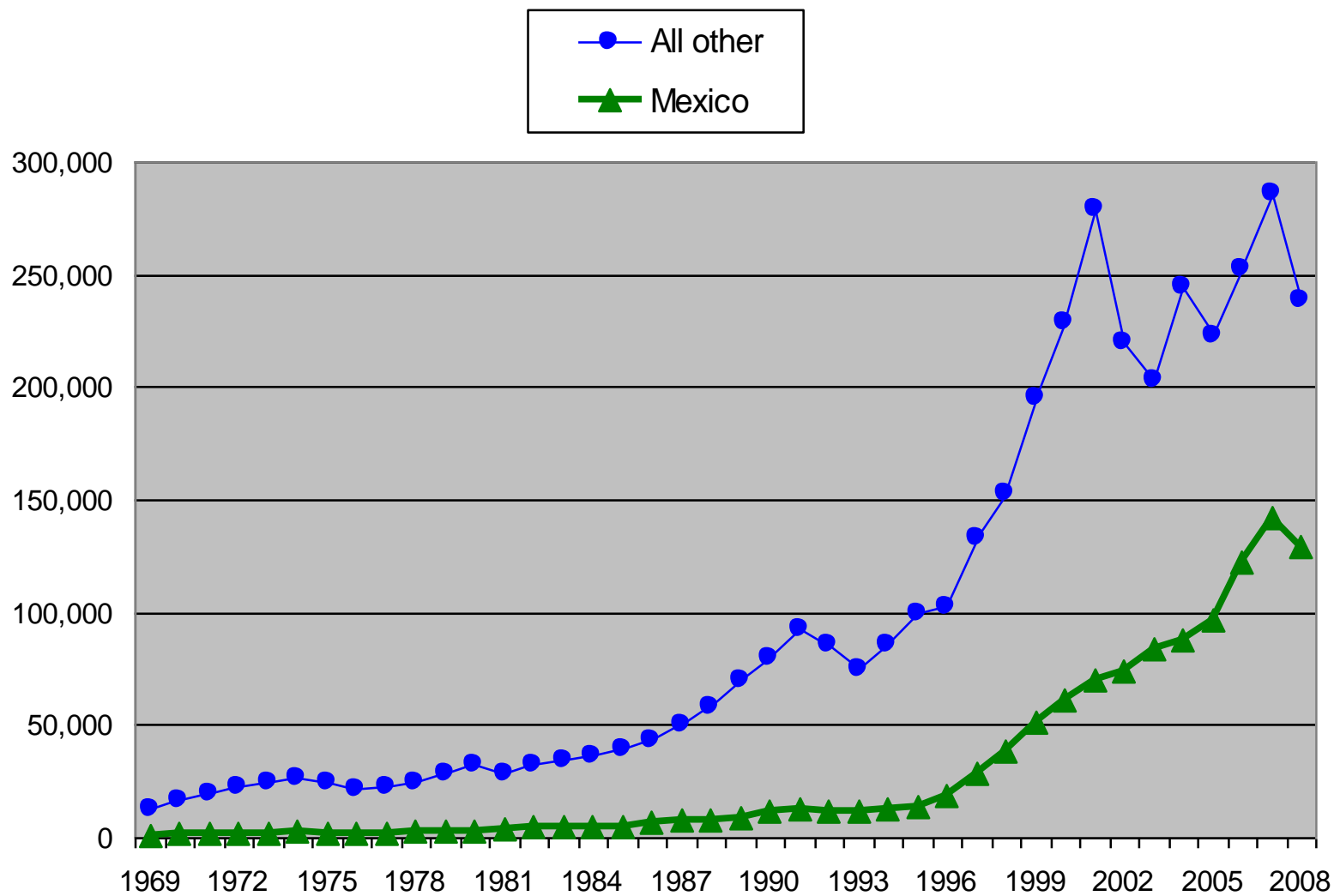


Source: US StateDept.

Major non-tourist visas issued to Mexicans, 2008

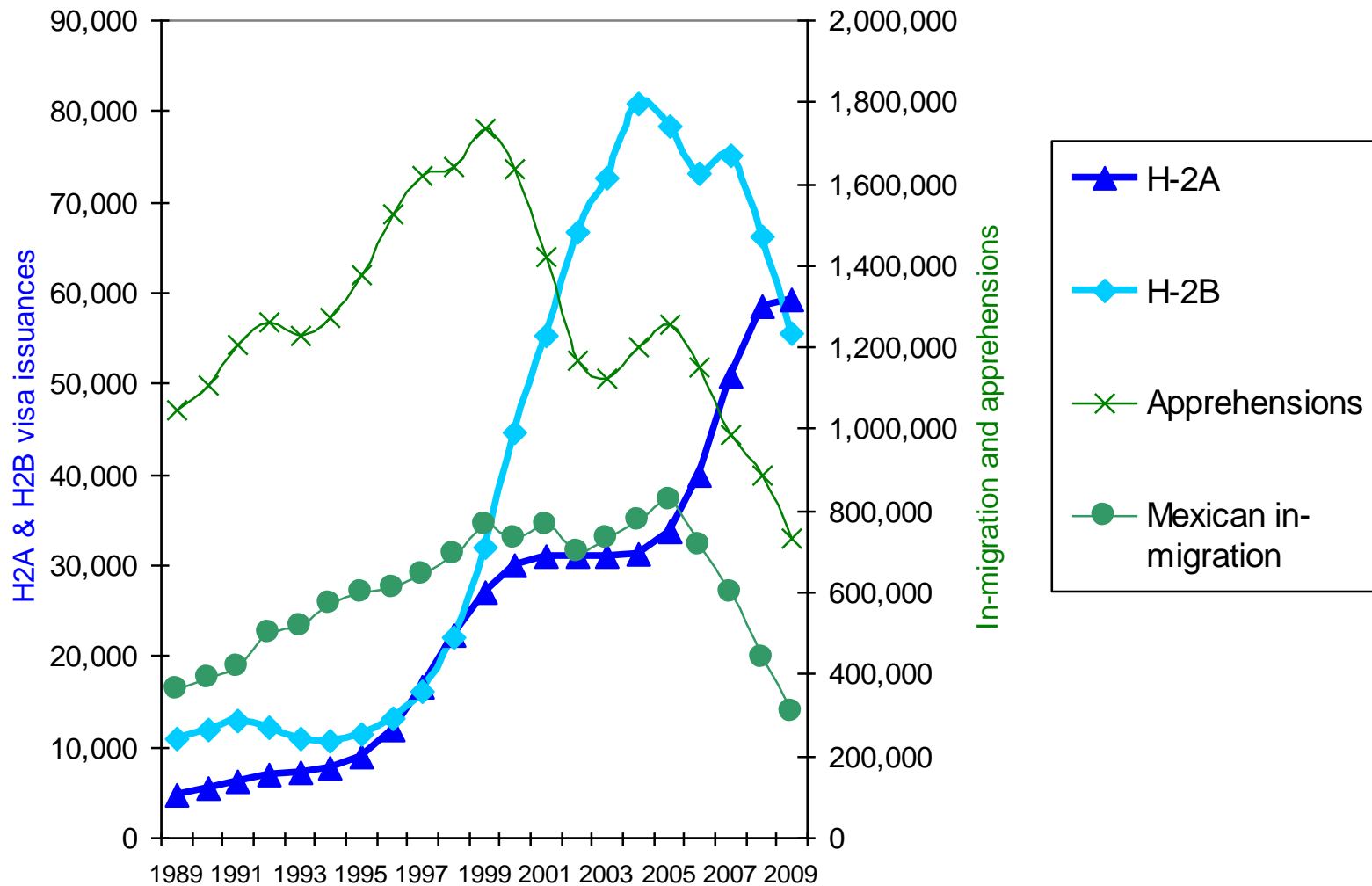


Total H & TN visas, Mexico and all Other Nations, 1969-2008



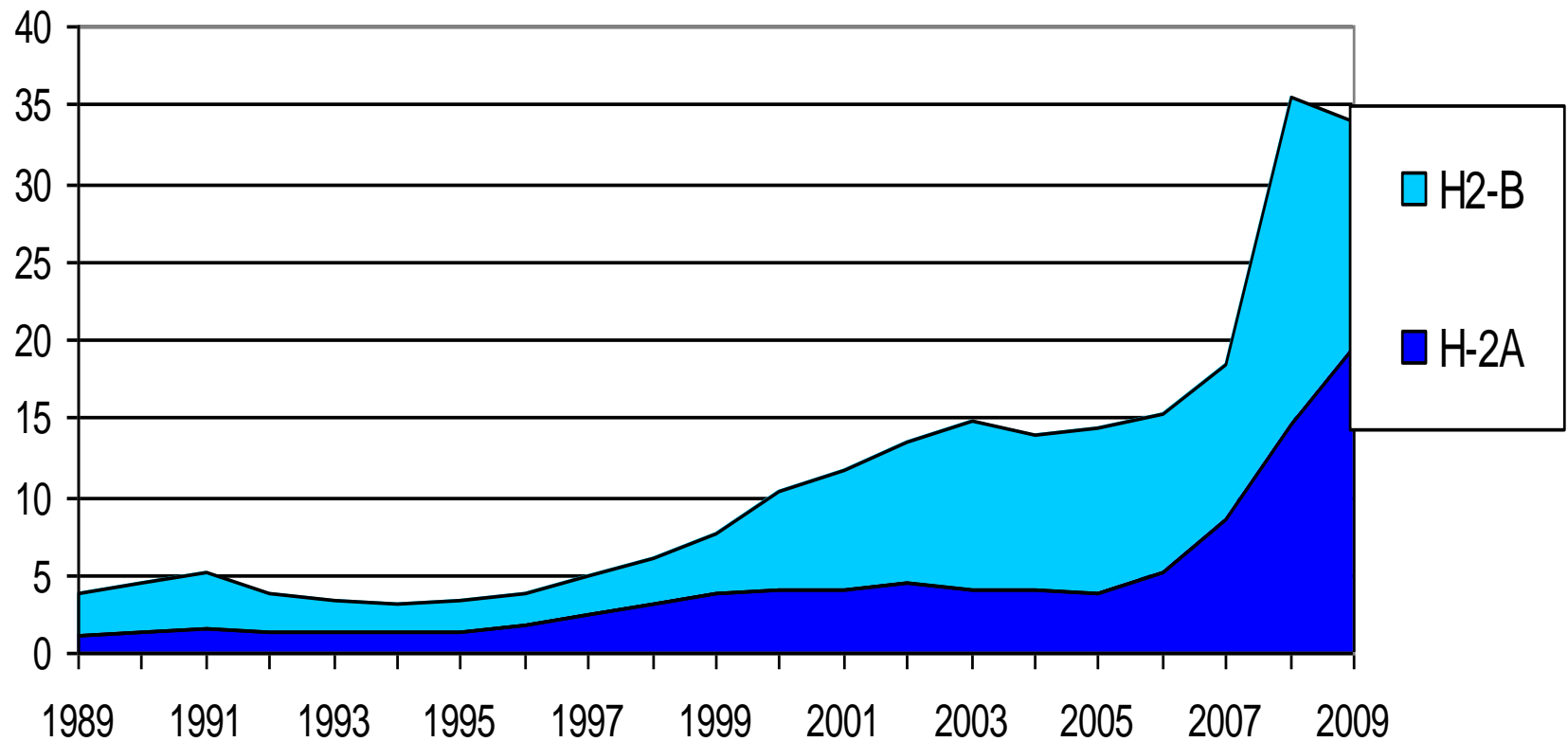
Source: US Dept of State visa reports

Figure 1. Number of H visas, Mexican in-migration, and apprehensions, three year moving average 1989-2009



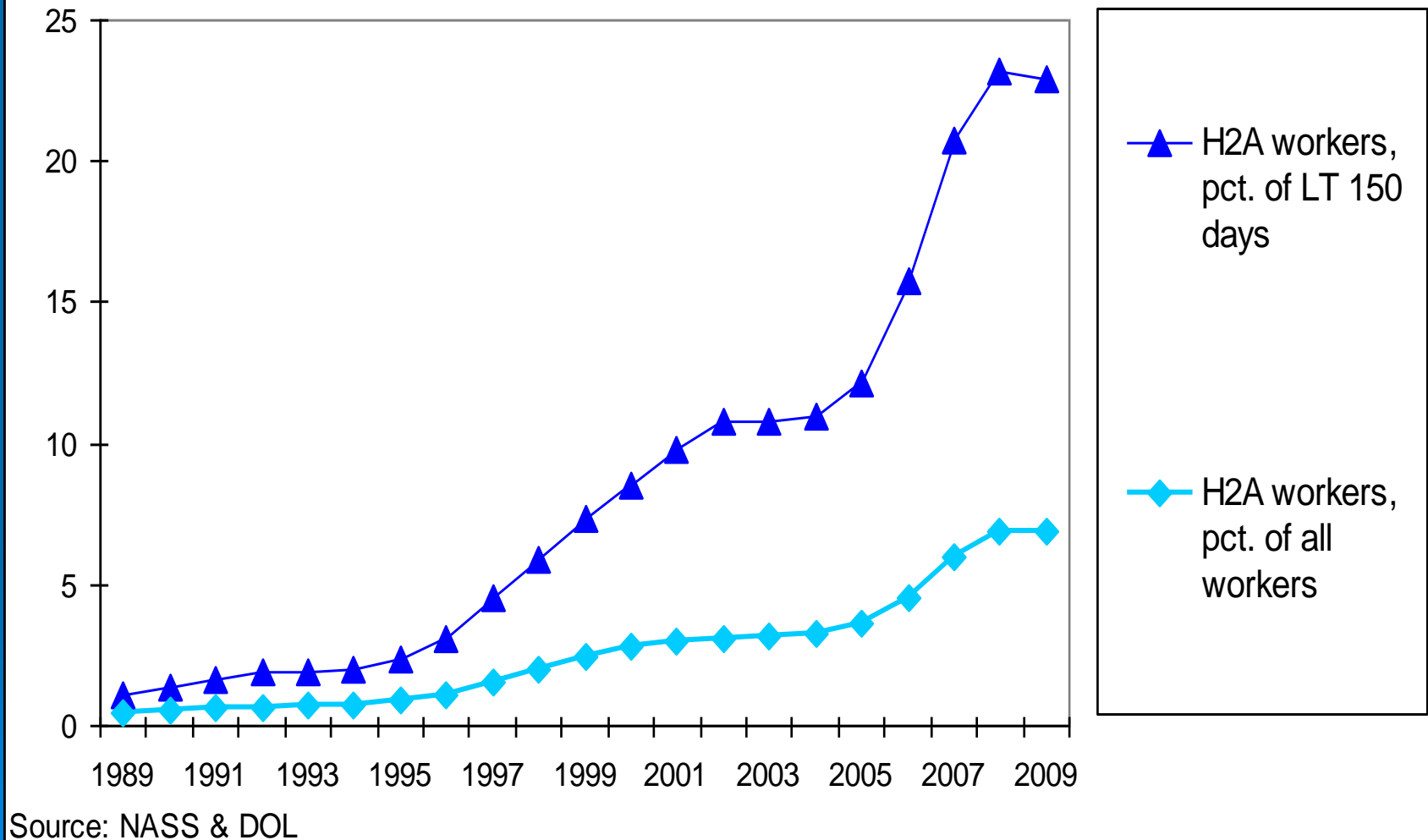
Source: Various, see cite in text.

**Figure 3. H-2A and H-2B visas relative to Mexican in-migration,
1989-2009**



Source: Passel and State Department

**Figure 5. H-2A workers of total and seasonal, percent
1989-2009**



Changing policy prescriptions

- Fixed numbers or variable?
- Fee based or other mechanisms?
- Unilateral or bilateral?
- Regulation and protection against abuse?

How many & how much

- Massey, backfire at the border
 - 300,000 visas annually, two-year stay
 - \$400 fee to migrants, upfront or over time
- Senate 2006 & 2007, fixed numbers
 - 400-200,000

Periodic & variable TWPs

- Standing commissions: MPI, EPI, Brookings
 - variable flows
 - recommendation or prescription, characteristics or numbers?
- Hanson, regulating low-skilled
 - auctions in government-controlled lots
 - ~ \$10,000 bid by migrants

US run or bilateral?

- Most US proposals are for US run programs, many experts urge bilateral management
- Responding to Bush proposals, some Mexican academics questions Mexican capacity to co-manage large programs
- Problems of abuse in current H programs